



CONTACT



Charlestown & Garden Suburb Uniting
Church Multi-Centre Congregation

26 May 2024

From Anne Threlfo

I'm sure I must have mentioned Nick Cave before! Nick Cave: Australian musician, song writer film scorer and blogger. He is an avid reader of the Bible and a regular church goer, yet is critical of organised religion, and doesn't describe himself as "Christian". I don't particularly care for Cave's music, but I always read his blog, "The Red Hand Files". Cave writes in response to letters written to him by his readers.

This week's letter is written to Cave by someone who is struggling with grief, heartbreak, the lack of justice in the world and a feeling of helplessness. Even though he and God "have always been very tight", God now feels absent. The writer acknowledges Cave's sensitivity to the many ways God shows up for us, and asks Cave if he has any advice on how a way back to God can be found. Here is Cave's reply:

Dear Friend,

A well-known couplet from Leonard Cohen's song, Anthem, goes, 'There is a crack, a crack in everything/ That's how the light gets in.' These words had always sounded like a platitude and a little corny to me, but a long, dark journey made me better understand their radical and unsettling nature – that God is often most acutely found in His absence.

This realisation shook me to the core, that the meaning of life – its joy, boundless beauty and love – emerges out of our most devastating losses. I learned that without the savagery of life, love has no true domain, and the relational quality of joy and beauty has no natural way to express itself. I came to understand that although the world's energising principle is love, joy ultimately declares itself most intensely through our heartbreaks.

As I said, it took a prolonged and painful journey to arrive at this insight, and perhaps that is the road you are on now. The idea that 'God is love' is a hard-earned truth, and it can be discomfoting to think that His presence is at its most resonant in life's darkest and cruellest moments.

Understandably, you feel heartbroken about the world – it can feel like a ruthless place, vindictive, and sometimes it seems personal. But I have realised that it is a moral error to compulsively fixate on the world's troubles, to elevate 'the crack in everything' and not acknowledge 'the light getting in.' Our pleasures and joys are not a negation of humanity's suffering, a betrayal of those we have lost, or the denial of our various griefs. They are the bright, necessary, God-filled articulations of our humanness. We humans are our own howling voids – cracked and beautiful things pierced by light. Faith is not something we find, it is bestowed upon us as a consolatory gift. Friend, there is no need to find your way back. You are already there.

Love, Nick

DIARY

Thursday 23 May

10.00am Morning tea in the Community - common seated area opposite Butcher at Charlestown Square
1.30-2.30pm Bible Study at Garden Suburb Church

Sunday 26 May – Trinity Sunday

9.00am Worship Service. Leader: Sue Pepper and Preacher: TBA
Isaiah 6:1-8; Psalm 29; Romans 8:12-17; John 3:1-17

Monday 27 May

1.30pm SFED

Tuesday 28 May

10.00am Morning tea in the Community at Lake Macquarie Square
12.00pm Garden Suburb Ladies Fellowship

Thursday 30 May

10.00am Morning tea in the Community - common seated area opposite Butcher at Charlestown Square
1.30-2.30pm Bible Study at Garden Suburb Church

Friday 31 May

10-11.30am Grief, Loss and Change at Toronto Uniting Church (see notice in Contact)

Sunday 2 June – Pentecost 2

9.00am Worship Service. Leader: Margaret White and Preacher: TBA
Including Children's Corner
1 Samuel 3:1-10, Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18; 2 Corinthians 4:5-12; Mark 2:23-3:6

Monday 3 June

10.00am Garden Suburb Nursing Home Pastoral Care Visitation
1.30pm SFED

Tuesday 4 June

10.00am Morning tea in the Community at Lake Macquarie Square

Thursday 6 June

10.00am Morning tea in the Community - common seated area opposite Butcher at Charlestown Square
1.30-2.30pm Bible Study at Garden Suburb Church

Sunday 9 June – Pentecost 3

9.00am Worship Service. Leader: Kerrie Dixon and Preacher: Rev Tom Stuart
1 Samuel 8:4-11; Psalm 138; 2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1; Mark 3:20-35

Monday 10 June

1.30pm SFED

Tuesday 11 June

10.00am Morning tea in the Community at Lake Macquarie Square

THE PRAYER PAGE



As part of the Uniting Church 35 days of Prayer pray for Luga Brae Bronte Uniting Church and access the prayers available each day on line, by joining Uniting in Prayer 2024.

Pastoral Prayer Points

* those in our congregation whose loved ones have died in recent times

* Elaine Ross

* Vivianne

* Shirley Elkin

* Lorraine Pepper

* Vicki

* Lesley

* Judith Fuller battling cancer

* Pam and Ken

* Lyn Benson

* Graeme

* Jean

* Fred Bryant

* June Locker

* Ryan Walpole

* Kathryn Gray

* Jacqueline Fenwick

* Isabella

* Janice Wright

* Eileen Dunn

* Mert

* Judith and family

* Enid Power

* Max

* Tom and Kathy on holidays for rest and restoration

Congregational Prayer Points

- Give thanks for the sale of Whitebridge property
- Pray for guidance and discernment for missional use of buildings into the future
- Project Reconnect
- Worship Services
- Cathy Beeton and SRE classes
- Worship Committee

Wider Community Prayer Points

- Pray for orphanage as they deal with the aftermath of floods
- Tom and Neos
- HCA and ongoing issues of homelessness, affordable housing and climate change
- Praise for the attendance and results obtained from the Founding Assembly of HCA
- those affected by climate change in Australia eg floods, droughts and fires
- Pray that a cease fire agreement will be negotiated between Israel and Hamas and that there will be relief from all the suffering
- The situation in Ukraine and other trouble spots





The Hunter Presbytery Prayer Diary



This diary provides an opportunity to pray each week for congregations in the Presbytery. By praying together, we can encourage one another in mission, as we grow in faith and unity and develop understanding and relationships across the region. Each week there will be information and a prayer for each of the congregations in the Hunter Presbytery. This week we pray for:

26 May 2024 – Jesmond Park Uniting Church

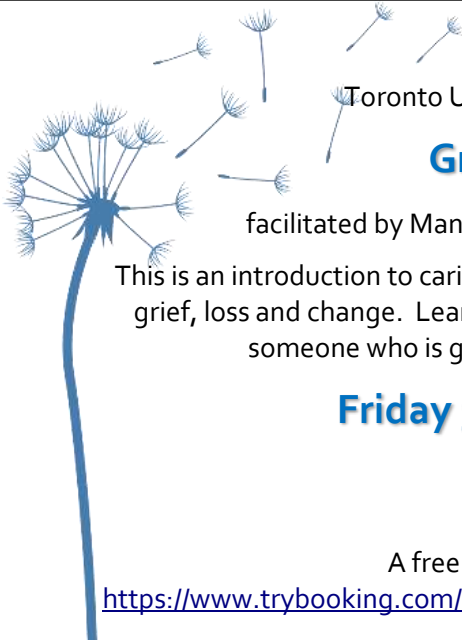
Jesmond Park Uniting Church is an active community of 40-50 regular worshipers with an age range from young children to elderly adults. Our 9.30am Sunday services take a variety of formats from traditional to a more modern and informal café church. Regular activities include Happy Feet (walking group), Faith@5 (young people's church on Saturday evenings run in conjunction with New Lambton Uniting Church), Stitch and Chat, Meditation Group and high school youth group (also run in conjunction with New Lambton). We have just committed to combine with Shortland/Wallsend Uniting Church to create a single Church Council while retaining two separate congregations. At present we are without a minister but are ready to embark on the process of finding a suitable person who will work with both congregations.

Prayer: We pray for the continuing development of a working relationship with Shortland/ Wallsend Uniting Church as both congregations learn to operate in a new era of joint governance and cooperation. We also pray for our growing relationship with New Lambton Uniting Church as we journey together along the path of young people's ministry through Faith@5 and youth group ministry. We seek wisdom and discernment as we further develop our mission plan and begin developing a Church



Tom and Kathy will be on holiday from 20 May to 2 June (inclusive).

If you have any concerns during this time, please contact Anne Threlfo, Julie Fenwick, or your Elder.



Toronto Uniting Church is hosting a workshop on

Grief, Loss and Change

facilitated by Mandy Cox, Bereavement Counsellor and Educator.

This is an introduction to caring for others, and for ourselves, through the experience of grief, loss and change. Learn about the impacts of loss and change, ways to support someone who is grieving, and when grief gets stuck – what then?

Friday 31 May at 10am – 11.30am

Toronto Uniting Church
118 The Boulevard, Toronto

A free workshop, but please register here:

<https://www.trybooking.com/events/1215499/sessions/4580807/sections/2285709/tickets>

for catering purposes:



IS IT TIME FOR A CHANGE?

Would you like to attend the Sunday Worship Service, but find 9am too early?

Would you be more able to attend Worship at 9.30am?

Would you prefer worship to remain at 9.00am?

Your Elder will be speaking with you soon!

THE WAY, MY WAY

MIRACLES HAPPEN ON THE CAMINO

Fundraising Movie Night:

Thursday 20 June at 6.30pm
Lake Cinema, 62 Main Rd, Boolaroo

Funds raised will help the purchase and
transport of relief supplies into Gaza.

Buy your ticket at Eventbrite using the QR code



The Way, My Way is the charming and captivating true story of a stubborn and amusingly self-centred Australian man who decides to walk the 800 kilometre-long Camino de Santiago pilgrimage route through Spain. He doesn't know why he's doing it, but one step at a time it will change him and his outlook on life forever. Based on Bill Bennett's best selling memoir of the same name, *The Way, My Way* has been described by Camino elder statesman Johnnie Walker as the most authentic film ever made about the Camino.



www.operationhopeaustralia.com

Supported by:



Club of Toronto Sunrise

Book using QR code, or follow on this link: <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/fundraising-movienight-the-way-my-way-tickets-894077428657?aff=ebdshpsearchautocomplete>



Some of our Church Contacts:

Minister

Rev Tom Stuart

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Administration:

P: 4943 4019

E: office@charlestown.unitingchurch.org.au

24 Milson Street, Charlestown NSW 2290

PO Box 449, Charlestown NSW 2290

Children & Families Resource Worker:

Mrs Cathy Beeton

M: 0409 445 933

E: Cath4858@gmail.com

Mrs Cathy Beeton is also our Safe Church Contact Person

Bank Account Details for the Charlestown Garden Suburb Multi-Centre Congregation:

Bank Account held with: Uniting Financial Services

Account Name: Charlestown Congregation General Account

BSB: 634 634 Account No.: 100030837

For Offering please put Ref: Offering

Keep up to date with happenings and info:

Webpage: <http://www.chagsuca.org.au>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/CharlestownUnitingChurch>

Project Reconnect: <http://www.projectreconnect.com.au>

Worship Services: <https://tinyurl.com/CHaGS-YouTube-Link>